

# BLESSED EARTH

*Serving God, Saving the Planet*

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## Gulf Oil Spill: The Christian Response

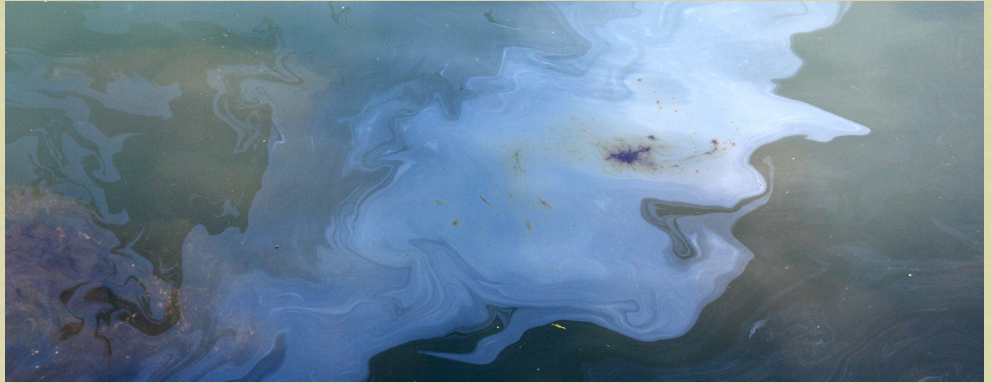
This past Sunday, many thousands of gallons of oil spewed into the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico and began its way up the food chain. At the same time, four-hundred thousand people sat in the midday sun and cheered as thirty-three race cars sped in a circle at two-hundred miles an hour toward the place they began five-hundred miles before.

While dolphins gasped their last breath, the race fans cheered. It was Memorial Day weekend in America, but it was not a typical one. We are witnessing an environmental catastrophe of biblical proportions—and the end is not in sight. For those of us who receive our marching orders from the Bible we should ask, “What does God have to say about this?”

When I open my Bible, I find that generally God is a God of very few words. He communicates directly with less than a dozen people, and these missives are usually very concise. (“Moses, take off your shoes.”) Not so when speaking to Job in the book that contains the longest soliloquy from God.

For those unfamiliar with the story, Job is a blameless pillar of society who loses his fortune and health. Most of the book contains a back and forth between Job and his friends, attempting to answer the age-old question, “Why do bad things happen to good people?” It reads like an argument between a husband and wife; things get repeated—only louder each time.

Finally, God shows up on the scene. His answer to Job’s question is a five-chapter walk through the glories of nature. Think



that God doesn’t care about the world and what we are doing to it? This section of the Bible says the morning stars “sang together” and the “angels shouted for joy” at the making of the earth. When answering our deepest questions, God points to the splendor of the coastline, the importance of wilderness areas, and the vastness of the constellations.

Much has changed in the millennia since the Book of Job was written. Humanity has traveled into space and peered at the bottom of the ocean; we have split the atom and sliced our genes, but we have not learned the lessons of hubris.

This Sunday I visited a church to talk about the Bible and the environment. As is often the case, it was the congregation’s first sermon on the subject, even though the entire Bible is filled with stewardship principles. Adam and Eve are told to tend and protect the earth (Gen 2:15). God instructs his people not to pollute the water (Ezekiel 34:18). And when Jesus is resurrected, Mary—not surprisingly—mistakes him for a gardener.

According to scripture, those responsible for the destruction of ecosystems can be held accountable by the creator of life (Revelation 11:18). But as Jesus taught, we should not judge others until we have gotten the log out of our own eye. Every time I fill up or use a plastic spoon and toss it in the trash, I am supporting the system that looks for oil on the ocean floor and beneath the permafrost of the poles.

This past Sunday we had nothing to be prideful about in front of the God who instructed Job on the ways of the deer and the ravens. It really was a Memorial Day. My prayer is that the church awakens to the biblical call to be good stewards of the planet. May God forgive us if we do not change.

With every blessing,

**Dr. Matthew Sleeth**  
Executive Director



### Green Scripture (Psalm 96:11-13)

“Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad, let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy; they will sing before the

### Green Tip of the Month

On your summer vacation, don’t forget to be a good steward! More and more hotels are becoming eco-friendly because it saves them money. Wherever you stay, use the same linens and towels during your visit. Washing fewer sheets and towels can save up to 40 percent of a hotel’s water use.





# Your Story: *Hope for Creation*

By Karoline Grober  
from Heredia, Costa Rica

Our family participated in Blessed Earth's Hope for Creation simulcast in April. We were thrilled to have access to such an exciting opportunity -- all the way in Central America. And who would have thought that Blessed Earth could place a "dot" on the map for Costa Rica!?

We enjoyed the worship music with Northland Church. Then, after viewing the beautiful film and listening to Dr. Sleeth speak, we took time to pray together as a family and asked the children to name one thing they could do more to serve God by going "green." The kids sat on the floor and thought for a few minutes. Our youngest son said he wanted to help animals in a direct way. He wants to begin to feed the birds on a regular basis and says he wants to also begin a charity program for ocean animals! Now, that's a challenge. Our oldest daughter, who is 12 years old, wants to eliminate disposable water bottles from our home. I am proud of my children!

I agreed to get recycling bins to continue to recycle. It's much better to organize them than having a pile of bags in our garage! I also want to figure out a good place to start composting. I hope to start a veggie garden



but don't currently have the space. My husband, Steve, promised that he would help our daughter find the right glasses for us to have to drink water instead of using bottled water.

We saw the fruits of the simulcast continue the next day with our daughter. That morning at school she had to write a persuasive essay, so she chose to write about serving the Earth. For us, this means the seed is planted in her heart and it's up to us to continue to encourage her and work together

as a family. Even though we started our creation care journey a few years ago, we feel that the Lord is teaching and encouraging us more as time goes on. It's a discipling process and a lifestyle we have chosen. With the help of the Lord we can continue taking small steps forward everyday.

Thank you, Dr. and Mrs. Sleeth, for your leadership and encouragement. May the Lord continue to bless, guide, and use you.



## BLESSED EARTH CREATION CARE FILM SERIES



The Blessed Earth film series is a revolutionary new resource for small groups. These 12 films and guidebooks will build a deeper appreciation for God's creation for your group members.

Find out more at <http://blessedearth.org/resources>.

*New Blessed Earth Resource!*

# 4-Part Creation Care Sermon Series

Our new 4-Part Creation Care Sermon Series offers an accessible, entirely biblical overview of creation care throughout the Scriptures.

Created by Dr. Ellsworth Kalas, veteran author and pastor, these outlines will inspire and equip congregations to be better stewards of God's creation.



## OUR MISSION

*Blessed Earth is an educational nonprofit that inspires and equips faith communities to become better stewards of the earth. Through outreach to churches, campuses and media we build bridges that promote measurable environmental change and meaningful spiritual growth.*

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